

Message Text

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PAGE 01 EC BRU 10057 131810Z

46

ACTION EUR-12

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SUBJECT: PREPARATIONS FOR ENERGY COUNCIL MEETING OCTOBER 19

1. ACCORDING TO LEONARD WILLIAMS, EC COMMISSION DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR ENERGY (DG 17), AND OTHER COMMISSION AND PERMDEL OFFICIALS, NO ATTEMPT WILL BE MADE AT ENERGY COUNCIL MEETING IN LUXEMBOURG OCTOBER 19 TO OBTAIN DECISIONS ON LONG-OUTSTANDING ISSUES IN COMMUNITY'S "PACKAGE". THEY RECALL THAT EARLIER ATTEMPTS IN 1976 TO COME TO GRIPS WITH THESE ISSUES-- THE MARCH 25 ENERGY COUNCIL AND THE JUNE SESSION WHICH WAS "INDEFINITELY POSTPONED"-- CAME TO NAUGHT, FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS, INCLUDING BRITISH REFUSAL TO ACCEPT OTHER ITEMS UNTIL A MINIMUM SAFEGUARD PRICE (MSP) REGIME WAS APPROVED, FRG RELUCTANCE TO BE CONSIDERED AS A MAJOR SOURCE OF FINANCING FOR SUCH PROGRAMS AS EURATOM LOANS FOR NUCLEAR ELECTRIC POWER STATIONS, FRANCE'S CONTINUED OPPOSITION TO MSP AND ITS RESERVATIONS REGARDING THE EXTENT OF THE COMMISSION'S ROLE IN THE EMERGENCY SHARING SCHEME, ETC.

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PAGE 02 EC BRU 10057 131810Z

2. RATHER THAN RISKING ANOTHER CONFRONTATION BY PRESENTING

THE COUNCIL WITH THE SAME PACKAGE OF ISSUES, THE DECISION WAS MADE--LARGELY AT DUTCH INITIATIVE ACCORDING TO WILLIAMS--TO HAVE THE COUNCIL CONCENTRATE ON A BROAD, POLITICALLY-ORIENTED DISCUSSION OF ENERGY PRIORITIES AS RAISED IN THE COMMISSION'S COMMUNICATION ON THE COMMUNITY ENERGY POLICY (EC BRUSSELS 9860). IN THE HOPE OF PRODUCING A MORE CONSTRUCTIVE ATMOSPHERE, THE COMMUNICATION WAS GEARED TO THIS PURPOSE THROUGH STRESSING THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE FUTURE ENERGY SITUATION, THE LACK OF PROGRESS TO DATE IN IMPLEMENTING ENERGY MEASURES, AND THE NEED FOR EARLY ACTION IN AT LEAST SOME AREAS. IN ADDITION TO THIS COMMUNICATION, COREPER WILL ALSO SEND A TRANSMITTAL LETTER TO THE COUNCIL REVIEWING THE HISTORY OF THE COMMUNITY'S UNSUCCESSFUL EFFORTS TO ARRIVE AT AN ENERGY POLICY, INCLUDING A COMPREHENSIVE SUMMARY OF THE STATUS OF ALL PROPOSED PROGRAMS AND MEASURES IN THE ENERGY AREA WITH A TIMETABLE SHOWING WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE. GENERAL AGREEMENT ON THIS APPROACH TO THE ENERGY COUNCIL ON OCTOBER 19 WAS REACHED AT A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL'S SENIOR-LEVEL ENERGY WORKING GROUP ON OCTOBER 5.

3. BY ABANDONING THE PACKAGE APPROACH, THE COMMISSION HOPES THAT THE COUNCIL AFTER AN IN-DEPTH DEISCUSSION OF ENERGY PROBLEMS AND PRIORITIES MAY BE PREPARED TO AUTHORIZE THE COMMISSION TO MOVE AHEAD ON THE MORE URGENT INDIVIDUAL MEASURES. WILLIAMS INDICATED THAT AGREEMENT WAS IN FACT QUITE NEAR ON EMERGENCY-SHARING AND THAT SEVERAL OTHER ITEMS, INCLUDING SUBSIDIES FOR THE FINANCING OF COAL STOCKPOKES AND RENEWAL OF THE COKING COAL PRODUCTION SUBSIDIES, MIGHT WELL BE RIPE FOR APPROVAL IN THE NEAR FUTURE.HINTON

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